

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Status

Claims 21-26 and 28-42 are pending. Claims 1-20 and 27 were previously canceled without prejudice. Claims 31-42 are withdrawn pursuant to a previous Restriction Requirement. Claim 21 is currently amended and finds support in the specification: page 15, line 24, to page 16, line 4; page 17, lines 17-23; and page 18, lines 11-22. No new matter is believed to have been entered.

Claim Rejections

Claims 21-26 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in view of *Kataoka* (JP 09-036405) and *Fujisaki* (JP 61-166182)¹. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Kataoka discloses a process for producing a solar cell module wherein a photovoltaic power element is sandwiched between a surface member and a rear surface member through the use of a sealing resin to produce a laminate (Abstract). *Kataoka* also discloses that the surface member is made of glass sheet or resin films (see [0039]) and that the rear surface member is made of only resin films (e.g., nylon or polyethylene terphthalate) (see [0043]).

In contrast, both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel of the claimed solar battery module comprise glass panels (see claim 21). Accordingly, as *Kataoka* is silent with respect to both the surface member and the rear surface member comprising glass panels, *Kataoka* neither discloses nor suggests the claimed solar battery module wherein both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel are made of glass.

¹ A certified English translation of *Fujisaki* (JP 61-166182) is submitted herewith.

In view of this deficiency of *Kataoka*, one must look to the second cited reference (*Fujisaki*) for potential fulfillment. *Fujisaki* discloses a solar battery module comprising a plurality of solar battery cells sealed in a transparent resin (see page 1 of certified English translation, "Field of Industrial Application"). *Fujisaki* also discloses that the plurality of solar battery cells are arranged on the surface of a glass plate, spacers (e.g., silicone rubber) are disposed between the solar battery cells, and then a resin is filled in, sealing the solar battery cells with resin (see page 2, lines 6-13; and page 3, lines 4-9). Accordingly, *Fujisaki* discloses that one side of the module is covered by a glass panel and is silent with respect to the other side comprising a glass panel. Instead, it appears that the surface of the other side is indeed the resin that was filled in to seal the cells. Thus, as *Fujisaki* is silent with respect to both the surface member and the rear surface member comprising glass panels, just as the case with *Kataoka* explained above, *Fujisaki* neither discloses nor suggests the claimed solar battery module wherein both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel are made of glass. Accordingly, both *Kataoka* and *Fujisaki* share the same deficiency of failing to disclose or suggest the claimed glass panels. Thus, the combination of *Kataoka* and *Fujisaki* does not render obvious the claimed invention.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Applicants' specification explains that when durability, hardness, flame retardancy, etc. of the resulting module are taken into consideration, glass is preferably used for both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel (page 15, line 24, to page 16, line 4; and page 17, lines 17-23). In addition, not only does the claimed module include both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel comprising glass, but both panels also have a thickness of 3-20 mm (see claim 21). Applicants' specification explains that the use of glass panels with such thicknesses means that the load of the weight of the glass panels is applied while sealing and therefore the sealing resin sheet pieces are necessary to prevent cell

cracks during the sealing process (page 18, lines 11-22), cell crack prevention/reduction and improved appearance being objects of the claimed invention.

In contrast, since neither *Fujisaki* nor *Kataoka* disclose both the transparent panel of the light reception surface side and the back face panel comprising glass, and having such thicknesses, the problem of cell cracking due to the weight of the glass panels is not recognized by these references. Accordingly, the use of “the same material used for the top and bottom resin sealing sheets (i.e. EVA or polyvinyl butyral)” of *Kataoka* for the sealing resin sheet pieces of the claimed invention is not obvious as alleged by the Office (Office Action, paragraph bridging pages 4-5). What may be “known in the art to ensure proper sealing” (Id.) may not afford prevention/reduction of cell cracking due to a heavy weight load during sealing which is one of the problems to be solved by the claimed invention. Thus, one skilled in the art would have no motivation to modify the make-up of the spacers (sealing resin sheet pieces) of *Fujisaki* from silicone rubber to the claimed ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, polyvinyl butyral, or polyurethane in order to prevent that which is not recognized as a problem (i.e., cell cracking due to heavy weight load due to the thick glass panels).

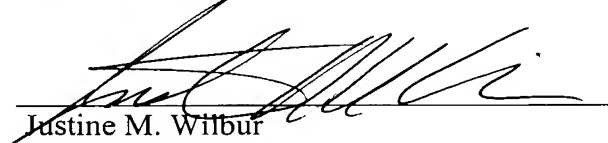
Therefore, the combination of *Kataoka* and *Fujisaki* does not render obvious the claimed invention for all of the reasons discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants request the withdrawal of this rejection.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit that all now-pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection and rejections, withdrawal of the restriction requirement, and passage of this case to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine M. Wilbur', is written over a horizontal line.

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